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The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

Editor—A. Q. Niaz

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The

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بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

نحمدہ و نصلی علی رسولہ الکریم

EDITORIAL

I come back to the Editor's desk after an absence of four months on leave necessitated by ill health.

Suffering from nervous break down, I was advised to take complete rest during this time. The best thing for me therefore was not to think of anything much, and throw all my petty worries overboard. I tried to achieve this and succeeded to some extent, but there was one thing that was never very far from my mind, and that was the Present and Future of the Review of Religions.

Scarcity of paper and the general very steep rise in charges of all kinds has hit newspapers and periodicals very hard, but the Review of Religions has suffered very much more in this respect than any of its contemporaries. Most of them have absorbed the shock by raising their price and a reduction in size. The *Statesman* and the *Civil and Military Gazette*, the two most influential papers in northern India, come out surprisingly thin as compared with their fat bulk before the war, and they sell at twice the pre-war price. The Review of Religions, however, made no reduction in size till the beginning of 1943, while even now its price continues at the pre-war level. Other news-

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papers and periodicals, moreover, as they serve a wider field of general interest, have far larger circulations. Consequently, better off financially, their capacity to tide over lean periods is greater.

The circulation of the Review of Religions, when I took charge in September 1938, was barely 200. Now it is just about 450, but even this figure which represents more than a double rise during five years, is far too disquieting.

Evidently matters cannot be left like this. This lingering sort of existence is a dead loss financially year after year, in addition to which there is the far more disturbing thought that this kind of lifeless existence does not and cannot fulfil the high aim for which this journal was founded by the Promised Messiah, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him.

The success of a newspaper or periodical depends mainly on three things : adequate equipment, proper management, and a capable editorial staff. These three factors, however, fall under a category of requirements with which the general public have little or nothing to do. I therefore may not go into this question here beyond saying that I am putting the matter before the proper authorities for due consideration.

But there is an aspect of the success or otherwise of the Review of Religions which depends entirely on the Ahmady readers of the journal.

If the Review of Religions were no more than a commercial enterprise, the income it yielded would decide its fate. Commercial enterprises are not continued if they show a loss ; the verdict of the balance-sheet is final.

But the Review of Religions was not founded for monetary gain, this being the reason for not stopping publication although perhaps it has never shown a profit.

Founded by the Promised Messiah as a mighty weapon of tremendous reach, to lay low all enemies of Islam in the intellectual field, its publication cannot be stopped while the issue is still being fought out,

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and while indications are that a battle mightier than ever before is soon to be joined.

Properly wielded, it *is* a weapon of unerring power, for otherwise it would not be in our hands now. The Promised Messiah would never have shaped this weapon if it was not sure and dependable. So we the Ahmadies must cherish it, burnish it up, and sharpen it, so that it should cut through the falsehood and unreality which stands in the way of Islam being universally acclaimed as the religion best suited to fulfil the deepest spiritual needs of mankind. This surely is the task of the management, but the management cannot hope to do it without help from the Ahmadiyyah Community in general, and from the subscribers and readers of the journal in particular.

Donations and monetary help of other kinds is not so much in my mind at present, though financial solidarity, undoubtedly, is of the utmost importance in its own place. What the Review of Religions stands in need of even more than financial help is a *really keen, unflagging interest* in it on the part of the Community.

Let me make my meaning clear by asking a plain question. Is the Community aware whether or not this journal is adequately doing the work for which it was designed by its holy founder?—work which was so important in his view that he addressed an appeal to his followers in these moving words :

"میں پورے زور کیساتھ اپنی جماعت کے مخلص جوان مردوں کی اس طرف توجہ دلاتا ہوں کہ وہ اس رسالہ کی اعانت اور مالی امداد میں جہاں تک ان سے ممکن ہے اپنی ہمت دکھلائیں.....
اگر خدا نخواستہ یہ رسالہ کم توجہی اس جماعت سے بند ہوگیا تو یہ واقعہ اس سلسلہ کے لئے ماتم ہوگا۔

If it is not doing that work, have they ever felt any concern over the matter? Have they ever expressed this concern in the proper quarters?

Here let me venture to suggest that this question can be answered intelligently only if you read the Review of Religions regularly. I, therefore, with all humility and emphasis, request the subscribers to be-

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come also its *regular readers*, and to persuade their friends as well to do the same.

Subscribers, by becoming regular readers (and sympathetic readers), can be of immense help to the Review of Religions. If they find it good they should put in a good word for it to their friends, helping thereby to enlarge the circle of its readers and widen its influence. Or if they found it not coming up to the mark, they could write to the management about it, or to the Nazarat and Hazrat Amirul Momineen Khalifatul Masih, so that *what can be cured need not be endured.*

Then there is another thing, though it is only another aspect of taking live and sustained interest in the journal. CONTRIBUTIONS. Without an adequate supply of contributions the editorial staff is left at a very grave and serious disadvantage in the task of improving and raising the standard of a journal, especially so the editorial staff of the Review of Religions which consists of only one man, who is also the manager. The same man, moreover, is editor and manager both of the Urdu Review as well. So those of you who can write, please do write for the Review, especially the English Review because that is the more starved of contributions.

There are many good writers in the Community I feel strongly tempted to mention here the names of some of the topmost whom, during the five years that I have been in the editor's chair, I have repeatedly requested, verbally and by means of letters, to be kind enough to write for the Review. But I am sorry to say *I have so far requested them in vain*, except to some extent in the case of Hazrat Maulvi Sher Ali, Mufti Mohammad Sadiq, Chaudhari F. M. Sial, and Maulvi A. R. Dard. To these gentlemen I give my sincere thanks. To the others—well, I can only tender my humble request again. But this time I rather feel constrained to add a note of warning. Those who have the capacity to help the Review of Religions but do not do so must bear in mind that they refrain from lending a helping hand in a work that was very dear to the heart of the Promised Messiah whose sacred

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Mission we are all solemnly pledged to serve, even to the extent of self effacement.

To do them justice, they are very busy people. But, as I look at the matter, their position in the Community is such that pressure of work cannot absolve them from the duty which they owe to the Review of Religions.

I must also say here a word or two to acknowledge thankfully the help of younger contributors,—younger and junior men like myself who have gladly put their shoulder to the wheel. If they continue, and take pains over what they write, they shall reap a rich reward in more ways than one.

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THE HOLY PROPHET MOHAMMAD

ان الله و ملكته يصلون على النبى يا ايها الذين آمنو صلوا عليه و سلموا تسليما

"Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe, call for Divine blessings on him and greet him with a becoming greeting."

We Moslems believe that the Holy Quran is directly revealed by God as a perfect guide and code of conduct for man, to provide for him a means to realize to the fullest extent his whole complement of creative faculties and inherent instincts. And the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him), is nothing more or less than the human embodiment of these Divine directions, a complete vitalised parallel of the Holy Quran in the form of a sentient and vibrant human being. He is the acme of human perfection in the sense that the human qualities endowed to us by the Creator have reached their highest development as human qualities in his person. Islam is essentially a human religion ; its aim is to make man perfect as a *man*, and not, as in the case of other religions, to try to thwart man's instinctive urges, to repress the human in him in a vain and dangerous attempt to raise him on a pedestal of divinity. Islam teaches that all human qualities are virtues when properly directed and exhibited on appropriate occasions.

The Holy Prophet lived through all the major phases of human experience, and thus he actually carried out in practice the rules and regulations which the Holy Quran laid down. Naturally I can take up only one phase of his varied career. I shall briefly deal with him as a ruler.

He organised a great nation out of practically intractable material. The Arabs at his time were unimaginably squalid. They were semi-nomadic, and no clan acknowledged any outside overlord. Internecine quarrels and blood feuds were the rage. Death on a bed was considered ignoble, and every freeman chose death by the sword. Their chief profession was loot-

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ing and robbing. The most honourable was the one most heinously steeped in lust and crime. They openly boasted of acts of incest and adultery ; and drinking, gambling and indulgence in all such violent bestial desires were their distinctive traits of character. It was out of this crowd that our Holy Prophet made a nation, and over them he assumed the reins of government. Under his great and dynamic leadership these same Arabs rose to be the torch-bearers of knowledge and the up-holders of culture during what in European history is now usually called the Dark Ages. They were the repositories of the Greek learning and were, during those centuries, the sole source of the humanities and the sciences. This transformation, it must be remembered, was effected in the space of a few years. History bears not the remotest parallel to this magnificent achievement.

It is true that the Holy Prophet had to resort to the sword too for self-defence. But who can now, living in these times, dare say that fighting is not a virtue under certain stresses ? These same battles of his gave rise to the gross fabrication that Islam was spread by the sword. Even now this prejudice has not died out. However, though he unsheathed his sword in pure self-defence, yet when all forces of disorder and persecution were quelled, he never willingly resorted to force again. He was a constructive builder. He created a stable society out of chaos. He gave peace and liberty, liberty in the truest sense of the term to the whole country, Moslem or non-Moslem. He said الفتنة اشد من القتل, *i.e.* Persecution is severer than slaughter. You can judge from this his tolerance and broad nature. And how did he lead his troops to victory ? To take only one instance. At the battle of Badr with 300 inexperienced, raw and ill-equipped men he fought and broke the ranks of 1,000 of the flower of the enemy's trained fighters.

His rule was not based on any system of hierarchy. He was the complete democrat, if that term can denote that to the Holy Prophet "A man is man for all that." He said, when he was the undisputed sovereign of all Arabia, "O people of Quraish, remember God

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Almighty has now abolished all national pride, all men and women are sprung from Adam and Eve, who were created from dust." He ruled his people on this high principle of human equality and brotherhood. He was absolutely impartial, and, if anything, his sympathies were tilted towards the poor. Once our Holy Prophet Mohammad, after a victory, was distributing an immense amount of booty amongst his followers. Of course he made an equitable distribution. Then he went to the mosque to pray. But just as he was about to start his prayers he remembered that some gold coins were left behind in his house. He hurried home and promptly distributed them, for fear lest this gold should be utilised by his family.

Our Holy Prophet did not sit on a throne, surrounded by all the customary pomp and paraphernalia of flamboyant royalty. He held his court sitting on bare earth along with his subjects, and his clothes, instead of the purple and sable of Kings, were not infrequently covered with patches. In spite of all this lack of splendour he was obeyed and followed as no king or ruler in the world has been obeyed and followed. And when anyone afflicted with poverty came to his court, he used to look significantly at those sitting around him, and they would hasten home to bring back what they possessed for him to distribute among the poor.

He issued these standing orders to his followers when they proceeded to battle :—They were not to fight unless attacked, and never to loot or to accept bribes from the vanquished. When entering a new land they were to pray in the following words, "O Our Creator, we solicit from you all the righteousness that is in this place and in these people and their things, and we seek your protection against the evil of this place, of this people and their things."

When our Prophet's teachings were attracting tribe after tribe to the fold of Islam, he strictly enjoined on his followers the observance of complete religious freedom. He said لا اكراه فى الدين *i.e.*, "Compulsion in the matter of religion is not permissible in any con-

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dition or on any ground". He commanded his followers to protect and respect the life, honour, property, and places of worship of all non-Moslem subjects. He went further. He opened all mosques to non-Moslems, Jews, and Christians, to worship God according to their prescribed rituals.

When he sent out his armies, he gave them strict orders to encamp far away from people's dwelling places so as not to cause the populace inconvenience. He said, "Do not despoil gardens and standing crops, fight only against those who attack you first, and do not draw your sword against monks, nuns, old people, children, women, priests, nor against those who lay down their arms." His treatment of prisoners of war is still more humane than and superior to what modern humanitarian principles can offer. The Holy Prophet gave express orders to forgive every aggressor when he was brought low and disarmed. The able-bodied prisoners of war were distributed among Moslem soldiers who received strict injunctions to give them all possible comforts and amenties of life. Many prisoners who came naked were clothed and fed and were then released. History records instances of Moslem soldiers feeding their prisoners on delicacies while they contented themselves with dry dates.

This present war has afforded us a strikingly similar parallel. Not so long ago a British ship conveying German prisoners was torpedoed by a German U-boat. As the ship was sinking, life belts were distributed among all the prisoners and the crew. A short time before the final plunge a British officer noticed that a German prisoner was without a life belt. He quietly took off the one he was wearing and gave it to the prisoner. That gallant officer then took his stand by the side of the Captain and went down with the ship. Now this conduct is what the Holy Prophet taught and enforced. That is why I am fully confident that Britain will come out victorious in the present conflict.

To return to the Holy Prophet Mohammad. As soon as he took over the reins of government he completely changed the order of things. In place of the abysmal ignorance, he gave the countries under him the

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light of knowledge ; idol worship was replaced by the worship of one God ; selfishness, vanity, cruelty, bloodshed gave way to selflessness, humility, kindness and love. In a country where no one was safe from sudden and constant peril, we see the lion and the lamb drinking side by side, so to speak ; in a country where human blood was cheaper than water, now under the Holy Prophet's rule even bird life and animal life came to be regarded as sacred ; the country where slaves were sold for a few cents, now saw the slaves rising to the eminence of chiefs and nobles. Before the Holy Prophet's rule woman was regarded as chattel ; now under his rule woman for the first time in the history of the world was raised to the position of honour, respect and love which is her due.

When the Holy Prophet was being persecuted before his accession to power, he is reported to have said. "The time will come when a man will travel all by himself unmolested from Safa to Hazar Moot and a woman will go from Quasiya to the Kaaba for pilgrimage and she will be afraid of none but Allah". These words of his were ridiculed and laughed to scorn at the time, but a few years later this prophecy was fulfilled in the letter and spirit.

That was why the Jews and the Christians in their thousands migrated to Islamic territories and many non-Moslem countries hastened to come under Moslem rule. Numerous gifts and presents from the Persian and Roman empires and from Abyssinia and Syria were sent to Mohammad (peace be upon him). But when he passed away to Almighty God his family did not have food enough for the evening meal. He died in two sheets, one that covered his upper half and the other in which his lower half was wrapped.

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AHMADIYYAT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CORPORATE NATIONAL FEELING IN INDIA.

The Ahmadiyyah Movement is, first and foremost a religious movement. Its aims and aspirations being purely religious and spiritual, it does not concern itself much with the political struggle going in India. But a peaceful and lawabiding citizen owes a duty to the country and the society he lives in ; and a true Muslim, a true *momin* is always foremost in the discharge of that duty. For the Holy Prophet has said ; "Love of ones native land is part and parcel of *Īmān*."

A true Muslim's conception of this duty, however, is fuller and deeper. It is in fact so deep that shallower natures and men of lesser calibre fail to penetrate to its depths. In India today the most popular form of service to the country is for political hotheads to clamour for " Liberty ", " Complete Independence ", and so on, without pausing to reflect that Liberty and Inependence are born out of the greatness of ones own soul, and that it is idle to talk of Independence for a country so long as that greatness of soul is conspicuous among its sons only by its absence. Now here the sense of duty of a true Muslim to his country would tell him to strive for development in the masses of that moral fibre without which Independence cannot be won, or if it is won at all it cannot be retained, because from a blessing it turns into a deadly curse lending to internecine wars, bloodshed, cruelty, oppression of faction against faction, and untold misery. Nevertheless, a political hothead rushes to the platform or the press to shout abuse at the Government. The temptation to take this short cut to greatness (acclaimed political leadership as Mahatma, or Maulana, or Allama, or something else) is too great ; while on the other hand the task of building up the moral fibre of the country is toilsome, thankless and discouragingly long.

Herein lies the basic fundamental difference between the political outlook of the Ahmadiyyah Com-

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munity and other bodies in India. Nurtured on the teachings of the Prophet of God for this age, it has learned to shun those easy roads which only lead to cheap notoriety ; its method is to work from solid, firm and permanent foundations. The vision of Prophets (benefactors and lovers of humanity in the highest sense) in all matters which touch the weal and woe of mankind is miraculously clear, sensitive and far reaching ; and this quality does not end with the Prophet. It descends to his followers in proportion to the strength of the spiritual tie between the disciple and his master. That is why the Ahmadiyyah Community has been able to avoid such political pitfalls as are involved in the barren Congress creeds of non-co-operation, passive resistance, " open rebellion ", and " quit India ". Or take the general body of the Indian Muslims. Disastrous political blunders stand out glaringly in the history of their political endeavour, *e.g.* the Khilafat agitation, from which the bottom was knocked out by the Turks themselves when they repudiated that institution itself and drove the "Khalifa" into exile ; and the tragic trek to Afghanistan and back that was called "Hijrat."

When leaders of Muslim India were deliberating upon the question of launching an agitation in favour of better terms for the Turks after the war of 1914-18 the Imam of the Ahmadiyyah Movement advised them not to tie it up with the question of the Sultan of Turkey being the Khalifa of the Muslim world. But this advise was ignored.

The goal of the Ahmadiyyah Movement is religious and spiritual, to gather all human beings under the care of One *Rab* (Creator and Sustainer), the Benign Lord of all, Blacks and Whites, rich and poor, rulers and the ruled, so that they should live at peace with themselves and their Creator. The Ahmadiyyah horizon embraces the whole world. The Ahmady conception of life does not seek to leave anybody outside in the cold physically, or in darkness spiritually ; and no one with a heart big enough would be prepared to say that this aim is not wortheir than political endeavour in narrow national grooves. We Ahmadies therefore

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may not diverge from our road in the pursuit of lesser aims without being false to the higher and nobler ideal.

The main policy of the Ahmadiyyah Movement thus is to give first place to first things, to press on toward its own goal. But in regard to those questions upon which depends the welfare of India its policy has never been such as to justify the charge that it is insensible to the needs of the country. On all important questions, in every crisis, it faithfully discharges its duty to India by tendering sound advise which Indian political leaders have always ignored to their cost.

For instance take the Hindu-Muslim question. Successful prosecution of the war against Axis aggression apart, the most important problem before India is the Hindu-Muslim problem. But had the advice of the holy Founder of the Ahamdiyyah Movement been followed in this respect, India today would have presented a totally different picture. The serious dangers inherent in embittered Hindu-Muslim relations were sensed by the Promised Messiah as early as 1895.

It must be remembered that during the last part of the 19th century there was a fierce flaring up of religious controversy in India. An honest and straightforward exchange of religious views is always to the good, being beneficial both intellectually and spiritually, but scurrilous attacks and unseemly language only create hatred and lead to trouble.

Late in the 19th century certain factors were ripe to create this mischief in India, chief among them being Christian missionary impact upon Hinduism, and a peculiar kind of aggressive mentality towards Islam on the part of Hindus which was partly the result of the end of Muslim political domination, and partly the outcome of a feeling of exasperation against Islam for it was still gaining converts from Hinduism even though it was not making any regular missionary effort.

Christian missionaries at this time were subjecting Hinduism to a bitter attack and were beginning to gain converts too, though their method of attack was not

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always of the worthiest. Evidence to this effect is copious but I would trouble the reader with only two short questions, one from the writings of Mr. Gandhi and one from the writings of the Rev. Mr. C. F. Andrews. In " My Experiments with Truth " (chapter on Glimpses of Religion) Mr. Gandhi writes that many things combined to create in his young mind (before he went to London to study for the bar) a toleration for all faiths, but—

> Christianity was at the time an exception. I developed a sort of dislike for it. And for a reason. In those days Christian missionaries used to stand in a corner near the high school and hold forth, pouring abuse on the Hindus and their gods. I could not endure this. I must have stood there to hear them once only, but that was enough to dissuade me from repeating the experiment. About the same time I heard of a well known Hindu having been converted to Christianity. It was the talk of the town that, when he was baptized, he had to eat beef and drink liquor, that he also had to change his clothes, and that henceforth he began to go about in European costume including a hat. These things got on my nerves.

And Mr. Andrews says[1] :

> When I came out to India as a missionary thirty-five years ago this mode of attack on other religions was fairly common. The effort was constantly made to show up the seamy side of things. In still earlier days the habit was even more pronounced. At one time, when I had to make research into early missionary literature for the purpose of writing a book on North India, I was profoundly shocked by the things I read in print. I remember also being given at Delhi, soon after my arrival, a whole series of pamphlets published by a missionary who had been employed at a station not far distant. They contained nothing but a number of bitter attacks upon what was considered to be the vulnerable points in the armour of Hinduism. Such form of controversy led to counter-attacks. Abuse was poured upon the Christian religion in turn. It was something like the modern armaments race, in which more destructive weapons are produced till at last open war ensues.

These factors created deep religious ferment in India and Hinduism felt the ground slipping from underneath its feet. Not in too favourable a position to meet the Christian onslaught, the Hindus cooled

[1] *The True India*, Allen and Unwin, page 14.

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their mind by pitching blindly into the Muslims. The attack of the Christian missionaries was directed against Islam as well.

The substance of Hindu and Christian attacks upon Islam was always baseless, and their language most objectionable ; and, what is worse, these attacks were made most thoughtlessly, for they were attacks of a kind to which Hinduism and Christianity stood equally exposed. Take polygamy, for instance, which is allowed in Islam, and even now Islam continues to be attacked in this regard. But it is beyond all doubt that Aryans in the Vedic age were polygamists, and so were the Biblical Prophets, the ancestors of Jesus Christ. Even school children in India know that Ramchandra's father had three wives.

Thoughtless attacks of this kind create great bitterness in the mind of the masses which abides there and continues to fester. Much of the wide gulf which now separates the two major communities in India is due to the blind fury of overzealous religious bigots which lay at the back of such religious controversies, and the Promised Messiah was very quick to sense the danger which has materialised fully in our days and continues to baffle our best minds. The poison of these attacks has eaten so deep into the mind that the masses from day to day hang dangerously poised for religious riots or individual deeds of blind, insensate violence. When the crying need of the moment is the growth of a corporate national feeling between the Hindus and the Muslims, the actual mental condition of the communities towards each other is one of hostility and distrust

Had the advice of the Promised Messiah been followed in regard to the control of religious controversies, it need not have been so. As early as 1895 the Promised Messiah drew the attention of the country and its government to the developing evil, proposing enactment of some law designed to ensure that :

1. No one should level an attack upon another man's religion of a kind to which the religion of the attacker was equally exposed.

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2. Followers of every religion should publish an authorised list of their religious scriptures, indicating the comparative value of each scripture.

3. Thereafter no attack upon any religion should go beyond the presentation of that religion contained in those scriptures.

The Promised Messiah tried to persuade the public (Hindus, Muslims and Christians) to present a joint memorial to the Viceroy embodying a request for control of religious controversies by means of some enactment along these lines ; and as far as he was concerned he put his ideas before the public, as well as the government, in a book he published, entitled *Hindu Dharm*, and two leaflets issued on September 22 and October 21, 1895.

The country and the government, unfortunately did not pay due heed to his advice ; and the consequences of that folly are today seen throwing their sinister shadow over the whole country.

Three years later the Promised Messiah took up this question again as the evil was showing no sign of abatement, rather threatened to get worse. What brought this question to the fore was a book entitled *Ummahātul momineen*, published by a bigoted Christian missionary. It was characterised by the most filthy attacks upon the Holy Prophet Mohammad and his noble spouses, attacks most maddening to the Muslim masses because they were uncalled for and absolutely unjustifiable. This book threw the Indian Muslims into great excitement and they demanded that it should be proscribed by the Government. But the Promised Messiah advised them to be calm and again urged enactment of some effective law to stop this mischief, adding one more point to the two previously requested by him in 1895, namely, that in view of the excessive tendency to attack other religions it should be enacted that no one was allowed to attack any religion and that the superiority of ones own religion should be sought to be established by dwelling exclusively upon its merits.

It was most unfortunate that this advice was

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ignored again. But the Promised Messiah returned to this question once more before he passed away. Practically from his death-bed he wrote a booklet entitled *Paighām-i-Sulha*. In view of the perpetual mis-understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims, and in view of the fact that without understanding and sympathy between them India's future is very dark, this booklet is of the utmost importance. The point made in it by the Promised Messiah was that—

> We being creatures of the same God, and living as we do in the same country, the unpleasant religious friction between us is very deplorable. The real cause of this friction is that we use insulting and unseemly language in regard to each others religious leaders. Let us therefore remove this cause of friction and begin to regard each other with understanding and sympathy. With this end in view I propose that we Indians should enter into a solemn covenant (any transgression against which should be held heavily punishable), that we shall in no case use objectionable language in regard to personalities with which the deepest religious susceptibilities of our countrymen are bound up ; that on the contrary we shall revere them as we revere our own religious leaders. As far as I and my followers are concerned, we are prepared to subscribe to the belief that the Vedic Rishis and those religious leaders of Hindu India who came later, such as Krishna and Ramchandra, were the chosen ones of God, and we would cherish their memories and look up to them with the same humility and devotion as we do in the case of our own Prophets. In reciprocation the Hindus should undertake to look upon the Holy Prophet Mohammad as an Apostle of God raised for the guidance of mankind, and to respect him as they respect their own Rishis. If the Hindus come forward to enter into this covenent, the question of cow-killing need not stand in the way of this rapprochement for the use of beef is permissible in Islam, not obligatory, which the Muslims could promise to forego for the sake of the greater good of the country. This covenant, to give it a truly national basis, should be signed by at least ten thousand well known men from each side.[2]

This proposal made a favourable impression, but the response unfortunately fell short of being translated into action, and the general situation has remained unchanged to these days. Thus, from apathy or short-

[2] As summarised in *Silsilah Ahmadiyyah* by Mirza Bashir Ahmad, Talif-o-Tasnif, Qadian, India.

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sightedness, or sheer misfortune, the people of India lost a golden opportunity of welding themselves in time into one composite whole, a development which would have cut short India's wanderings in the wilderness in the quest of her political goal.

The curious part of the business is that everybody realises the pressing necessity of Hindu-Muslim unity, politicians not the least, but all keep on missing the right way to it even after it has been pointed out so repeatedly. The Gulf meanwhile continues to widen.

Had amity been created between the Hindus and Muslims in 1908 on the lasting basis of these proposals, India in 1944 would have presented a far more pleasing picture. But though others should fail to realise the importance of the Promised Messiah's Message of Peace, the Ahmadiyyah Community loses no opportunity of pressing it upon the country. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the situation in India is such that one cannot forget the Hindu-Muslim problem even if he would, for disquieting incidents continue to happen from time to time.

Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad, the present Imam of the Ahmadiyyah Community turned his attention to this question very early in his Khilafat. Representations, however, again proved futile until two ugly incidents happened which gave great weight to the Ahmadiyyah contention.

Now again we are dealing with a period when a number of scurrilous attacks were made upon the Holy Prophet Mohammad. In 1924 an Arya Samajist wrote a book, *Rangila Rasul*, which was one of the worst of its kind. He was prosecuted by the government, the case dragging on for some time in the law courts of the country. But finally the Lahore High Court had to acquit him because the law as it then stood was found to be inadequate for dealing effectively with offences of this kind. This was in 1927. In April 1929 a misguided Muslim youth assaulted the writer of *Rangila Rasul* and killed him. In 1927, just about the time when Rajpal was acquitted, a Hindu monthly magazine, the *Vartman*, which was

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published from Amritsar, published a most offensive article against the life of the Holy Prophet Mohammad. These offences, coming so soon upon the heels of one another, caused a wave of anger to sweep over the Muslims from one end of the country to the other.

These incidents focussed the attention of the Imam of the Ahmadiyyah Community upon this problem as never before. He advised the Muslim public to keep calm. He pressed the government to make effective provisions in the law of the land for dealing with such offences. And he demanded that the offenders in these two cases be called to account, while he condemned the murder too in clear words. In the summer of 1927 he discussed the question with a number of influential men in Simla and impressed upon them the need of doing something in this respect; he explained his point of view to important government officials; and he instructed the Ahmadiyyah missionary in London to move this question in the British Press and Parliament.

These efforts, as far as the provision of law was concerned, were successful to some extent as a clause was added to the existing law which gave to the courts clearer powers than had been the case before. The Muslim public showed great appreciation of all that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih did in this behalf for the common cause, and the Muslim Press expressed its gratitude in no uncertain terms.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih, however, was not endeavouring solely in the interests of the Muslims. His aim was to safeguard the fair name of all the chosen ones of God from the misguided fanaticism of religious zealots. The making of laws and the enforcement thereof lies in the hands of legislatures and governments, of which the ponderous machinery comes into motion slowly. He diagnosed correctly that these base attacks upon the Holy Prophet Mohammad were in most cases the result of ignorance on the part of the public which in the worst cases was exploited by interested persons for their own selfish ends. He therefore came to the conclusion that the best way to eradicate this evil was to

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dispel this ignorance ; and for this purpose he directed his followers to hold meetings all over India, and abroad wherever possible, once every year. These meetings were started in 1928 and continue without break. Proceedings of these meetings embrace lectures on different aspects of Islam and the life of its holy founder. Enlightened people of other religions are especially invited to these meetings. The platform is open to them, and every year scores of their scholars come forward to pay moving tributes. Hundreds of them have declared after participation in these meetings that they constitute the best method for promoting mutual understanding and amity.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih also suggested at the same time that the followers of other religions too should hold similar meetings to commemorate the lives and teachings of the founders of their respective religions, promising full Ahmady co-operation and support for the purpose. It is much to be regretted, however, that this valuable suggestion was not taken up, and the Imam of the Ahmadiyyah Movement at last decided in 1939 to shoulder this task as well. Since then Ahmadies all over the world hold another meeting every year when they themselves speak appreciatively of the work of all the Prophets of God—Moses, Jesus, Zoroaster, Buddha, Krishna, Ramchandra, Confucius, and religious leaders like Baba Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion ; and they invite the followers of these religions also to come to the platform.

Through these meetings the followers of different religions are learning to appreciate one another. If only half, or even a quarter, of the energy wasted in barren political endeavour against the government and against each other could be diverted into this channel the situation in India might change radically in no time.

And the Message of Peace issued by the Promised Messiah stands to-day as always. India must either pay heed to it or for ever remain a slave country. If the Hindus and Muslims continue to fight among themselves it is idle to talk of such things as

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Freedom and Independence, because even if Great Britain sets us free some one else would find it profitable to place his foot upon our silly and supine neck. **India cannot realise her political destiny unless the Indians unite among themselves and for creating this unity the way pointed out by the Promised Messiah and his successors is the best, the speediest, and most effective.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The September, October and November issues of the Review of Religions would be published (Combined) on November 10, and will contain a complete translation of Nizam-i-Nau, the lecture delivered by Amir-ul-Momineen Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II at the annual gathering of 1942.

—Editor.

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